

SPEECH

Thomas Jefferson
1810 - 1865 OF

MR. HENLEY, OF INDIANA,

In the House of Representatives, December 22, 1844—

On the bill for the collection, safekeeping, and disbursement of the public moneys.

Mr. HENLEY said he had no desire to go into an investigation of the causes which led to the glorious political victory lately achieved by the democratic party—that party to which he was proud to belong; nor was he ambitious to enter into debate here at any time, for he had perceived that speeches made upon that floor had but little weight there or elsewhere; but if the time of the House must be occupied in that manner, he would take the liberty to use a small share of it.

The gentleman from New York [Mr. HUNT] has said that, at the time of the Baltimore convention, or prior to it, the democratic party had determined to have a new man and new measures. Now that gentleman must have known well that no new measures were adopted by the Baltimore convention, save one; and that on an emergency which had at that time arisen, which did not conflict with a single principle of democracy; but, on the contrary, was in perfect unison with every principle in our political creed. As to the fact which seems to haunt the gentleman and his party like Banquo's ghost—viz: that we did not choose to nominate Mr. Van Buren—it was easily explained, and was in a great degree to be attributed to the whigs themselves. They had pursued him so long with such an unrelenting flood of falsehood, slander, and detraction, that the people, who are themselves always honest and confiding, were induced to give some credence to their statements. The election was close at hand. There was not time enough intervening to counteract the impression which had been, he frankly confessed, but too successfully made upon the public mind. We believed that we could elect Mr. Van Buren; but, to make assurance doubly sure, as so much depended upon the contest—as the very destinies of republican liberty hung upon that issue—we fancied (possibly without cause) that the prejudices against Mr. Van Buren were too strongly rooted to be removed in season for the election—therefore we chose a new man; and besides, we knew full well the habits and propensities of our opponents. We knew their desire in political contests to call to their aid the weapons of slander and detraction; we determined to take a man impervious to all their shafts; we determined to take a man and rush him in before their favorite instruments of warfare could perform their office. But, sir, there was another thing which, I confess, had something to do with the choice of the Baltimore convention. Our opponents had marshalled all their forces, and had been training and drilling them for years against Mr. Van Buren; they had spent time and labor and money without stint, and with a zeal worthy a better cause, in manufacturing capital to operate against him; they had been laying away documents; they had literally piled Pelion upon Ossa in their store-house of capital—in their magazine of political ammunition for the campaign of 1844. Their artillery was ready, the match was blazing, and they awaited only the action of our

convention to “cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war;” but behold, when that convention rose a new leader headed our columns—a new standard bearer bore aloft our flag. They had lost their capital; “Othello's occupation was gone;” their small arms would not reach us, and their big guns were rendered useless. Hence their piteous wail, their anxious inquiry, “why did you not nominate Mr. Van Buren.” But the gentleman takes consolation in another thing about which he is equally at fault. Mr. Van Buren stands as high now in the estimation of the American democracy as he ever did; he has only been requested to stand aside for one equally yet not more worthy, equally yet not more pure and virtuous, equally yet not more devoted to our principles, but one on whom the swill tubs of federal slander had not then been emptied, but who has since received a full share of their filthy contents, with an effect which should deter the operators from similar efforts in future. The charge of toryism against the venerable ancestor of President Polk has recoiled upon the heads of its guilty propagators with a withering force and efficacy that makes them shrink from the very gaze of the high-minded and noble of all parties. This hyena-like resurrection of the bones of a revolutionary patriot—this unhallowed defamation of the name of Ezekiel Polk, who fought through the whole revolutionary struggle with a zeal and undaunted bravery equalled only by those who shared with him the same scenes of toil and danger, has received a rebuke at the hands of the American people which must forever deter all whose hearts are base enough to prompt them to the perpetration of similar outrages.

Mr. H. would next advert to the remark of the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. SCHENCK,] viz:—that he [Mr. S.] could see no distinction among democrats in making selections for office; that he had told his people the democracy would be as likely to choose one man as another; and that he had particularly cautioned all the county-court lawyers of his acquaintance in the locofoco ranks to look out whenever a democratic convention should be in session, for they might with as much propriety be put in nomination for the presidency as Mr. Polk had been. This is no new remark to me (said Mr. H.); I have heard it before—heard it in the bar-rooms and upon the steamboats. It was but the other day a gentleman said to me: “Why, sir, this election shows that your party has no respect for great men; you could take up a constable and elect him.” To this I replied, “Certainly, sir; and there are a great many constables whom I, and I doubt not a majority of the people, would vote for in preference to your ‘great embodiment.’” Now, Mr. H. would say to the gentleman from Ohio that there was more in these remarks than meets the eye. It carries us back to the true principles which divide the parties; it shows that while we look to great principles as the beacon-light which guides us onward, they are following the blind lead of men; that while we draw our lessons from the experience and wisdom of the past, and the example and advice of our republican fathers, they are passively following in the

train of partisan leaders, and denouncing the democracy as progressive democrats. There is nothing (said Mr. H.) in which the parties differ so widely as in their estimation of men. For one, sir, I reject all those ideas of nobility, or even great superiority, among certain families or connections. I believe there is far less difference in the capacity and mental ability of men than is supposed to exist, even by many of my own party. My intercourse with the people (and it has been with all classes) has satisfied me that you are as likely to find men of worth, integrity, and honesty—yes, even high intellectual endowments—among what is invidiously termed the middle and lower classes—as in the so-called higher walks of life. Give me, sir, child of the humble laborer, that I find in rags in the street, out of which to mould the man of energy, of usefulness, and of talents. Ours is a country of equal rights; and it approximates much more to a country of equal talents than many have supposed. And I would say to all young men that energy and perseverance are the main secrets of success; and although they may look at those in high places, and become giddy at the very thought of ascending to the same eminence, yet they possess within themselves all the abilities necessary to enable them to fill those same stations with credit to themselves and advantage to the country. Is an example required? The very subject which furnishes matter for this debate gives a memorable one. The hum-boy thirty years ago, in the wilds of Tennessee, is now the President elect of a nation of eighteen millions of freemen. This is the beauty of our government; and, above all, it is in perfect harmony with the principles of democracy. This sneering of our opponents at the election of a man whom they call obscure and comparatively unknown, is proof, conclusive proof, of their aristocracy of feeling, and of the utter contempt with which they look upon the worth and integrity of the masses, and strikes at the very root of the principles which divide the two great political parties in this country.

With the democracy, men are nothing—principles everything. And when the people have once decided upon a principle or a measure, the greatest men in the country are perfectly impotent in any effort to thwart their will. Why, sir, the leaders, or those who fancy themselves as such, are all mistaken. They imagine that, because they have pursued a course of policy which has met the approbation of the country, it was their views and opinions which formed and moulded the sentiments of the people; when, in fact, they were only instruments in the hands of the people to execute their will. To test this, let any one of those men attempt, for a moment, to stand in opposition to popular sentiment: he is instantly swept away by an avalanche of public indignation; and becomes as much the object of detestation and contempt as he had been of respect and admiration. Let, then, all who aspire to be leaders be certain to lead in the direction indicated by public sentiment, if they desire to be successful.

But, sir, a word or two in regard to the independent treasury. Was that question in issue in the last campaign? It was certainly as much a test question then as it was in 1840, when our opponents claimed it to have been directly in issue. Now, when they came into power in 1841 the first and almost the only thing they did, except the creation of a mammoth bankrupt law, was the repeal of the constitutional treasury; and what was the consequence?

Why, sir, they went to the country for a justification of what they had done, and the result was that, from an overwhelming majority in this hall, they have been reduced to a lean minority. It may not be, sir, that the people have decided precisely in favor of this bill; but they have declared that the democracy shall hold the reins of government. We are—and were in the contest—known to be opposed to a national bank, and to be equally hostile to a return to the pet-bank system, which we have ourselves tried, and it has been alike condemned by both parties. This will not be denied. What, then, is expected of us? What are we expected to do by those who voted the democratic ticket in the last election? The United States Bank and the State bank system are both repudiated by the people. Is it not, then, our bounden duty, without delay, to provide some safe and constitutional means for the collection, safe-keeping, and disbursing of the public funds? This we have done in the bill now before the committee. Its provisions seem to me to be salutary and proper; it therefore has my hearty support; and in my judgment its passage into a law is as necessary and expedient as even the existence of the authority which creates your officers of the army or navy, or any other of the departments of government. There is now no place of deposit for the public moneys; there are no officers legally authorized to receive and disburse them. The purse as well as the sword is, in fact, in the hands of the executive. The government cannot be kept in motion without this or some other law for the same purpose. It seems to me that all opposition to this measure now should cease. Formally our opponents opposed it because they had hopes of establishing in its stead their favorite project of a national bank; but now, since that has become an "*obsolete idea*," and they have abandoned all hopes in that quarter, and as they have proposed no substitute for it, one would suppose, and the country has a right to expect, that hostility to the measure would now cease, and it would have been permitted quietly to become a law. But, sir, this bill contains one provision which our whig friends seem to be particularly hostile to. I allude to the section which provides for punishment in the penitentiary of all those who are convicted of stealing the public money. When this bill was repealed by the whigs in 1841, the democracy made a strong appeal to them to save this section, and permit the thief to be punished, for there was no other law for that purpose; but the whig party being then in power, and their friends holding the purse-strings of the nation, and being the only ones in danger by its operation, obstinately refused to let even that section remain, and the whole bill was lost. But now that objection is removed; the democrats are in power; and if they would not punish, by severe penalties, their whig friends, we ask of them at least the privilege of sending any democrat to the penitentiary who may be guilty of filching the people's money. Why this opposition? Why, sir, all inducement on the part of the whigs to oppose this law has ceased to exist, unless, indeed, they may hope (and that is scarcely probable) that, at some future day, they may again come into power, and subject themselves to the necessity of repealing the law, or exposing their friends to the operation of its penal provisions.

Mr. H. next adverted at some length to the position of the gentleman from New York, [Mr. HUNT,] who had been formerly a supporter of Jackson and Van Buren; and on one occasion the democratic can-

didate for Congress in his district—was defeated—and, in the hour of danger, deserted his party—and is now here to denounce his former associates, with whom his acts show he would have been glad to act had they been sufficiently numerous to send him to Congress.

The gentleman from New York, [Mr. HUNT,] in the plenitude of his good nature, and urbanity of manners, has told us a story of a physician of his acquaintance, who, when he discovered his practice falling off on account of the diversity of opinion among the people in regard to the different systems of medical practice, advertised that he was acquainted with all the theories of medicine extant, and was prepared to practice upon any theory to suit the views of his customers. To the advocates of the steam he was a Thomsonian, to the friends of the homœopathic practice, he was a homœopathian; and he would practise also according to the prescriptions of the regular faculty.

Now, the gentleman will find this story much more applicable to his own party than ours. Formerly their political practice has been based upon the theory of the old school of physicians—Hamilton, Adams, &c. In 1840 they tried the steam system, in which they killed more than they cured; and now the people have determined to take their measures upon the principle of homœopathic practice of medicine, which, I believe, is this: that the less you give of it the better it is for the patient. The late elections indicate this in characters too plain to be misunderstood. The gentleman seems at a loss to know what questions have been decided in the late contest, and asserts that the party has advocated free trade at the South, incidental protection in the West, and a high tariff at the North; and inquires what is to be the verdict of the jury in this case? Now, if my friend means to arraign the people and have them tried before a jury for the crime of refusing to elect Mr. Clay President, I can tell him what will be the verdict; it will be such a one as was rendered by a western jury, in a case where several persons were charged with ducking an individual for whipping his wife. The jury retired, after hearing the case, and shortly returned into court with a sealed verdict, which, on being opened and read by the sheriff, was in these words: "*Served him right.*" Now, sir, let the whig party arraign the American people before the grand tribunal of public sentiment, for not electing the great embodiment to the presidency, and my word for it, the verdict will be "*Served him right.*" In fact, Mr. Speaker, a mere cursory review of the political history of Mr. Clay is sufficient to satisfy any man of candid mind of the justice of this verdict. His unbounded ambition, and the unscrupulous means he has been ever ready to use for the accomplishment of his unhallowed purposes; his want of political, not to say moral, integrity; his opposition to a national bank in 1811, and his advocacy of the same measure in 1815 and 1816; his being an avowed republican candidate for the presidency in 1824, and selling out his principles, and transferring his friends to the support of the blue-light federal candidate of Massachusetts, for the sake of office under his administration; his violation of the instructions of the legislature of his State, in voting for John Quincy Adams in opposition to the hero of New Orleans; his support of a high tariff in 1828, and his abandonment of all protection in 1833; his assertion in 1833, that such protection as would be afforded by a horizontal duty of 20 per cent. was all that

was needed by the manufacturing interest, and his declaration in 1841, that there was no necessity of protection for protection; his letter to the South advocating a mere revenue tariff, and to the North in favor of the tariff of 1842, with an amendment in favor of protection to kid gloves and Cologne water; his opposition to poor settlers on the public lands, denouncing them as land pirates and robbers; his advocacy of that trio of federal measures—bank, high tariff, and distribution—the first to grant a monopoly for the benefit of wealth, the second to rob one class of society for the advantage of another, the third to plunder honest industry generally for the benefit of indolent wealth; his support of the bankrupt law, to enable swindlers to cheat honest men out of their just dues, and his refusal to vote for the repeal of that law, though instructed to do so by the almost unanimous vote of both branches of his legislature, thereby showing his utter contempt for the will of the people, and the interests of the country; his sending out his relative, C. M. Clay, to the North to preach abolition and intrigue for the votes of that class of persons, saying to him "be careful how you pull the wires, Cassius; you know I am in a critical position. John Speed Smith says Kentucky is in danger;" while he was at the same time urging *modestly* his own election in the South "to preserve the Union;" his four Texas letters, in the first of which he is opposed to Texas, in the second he has no "personal objection to it," in the third he would be glad to see it, and in the fourth he would write no more letters about it, and is sorry he has ever written any; his antimasonic correspondence, in which he tells the South Hanover Indiana committee that it is none of their business, and the antimasons of Pennsylvania that he had forgotten the grips, and could not find his way into a lodge; his command to Mendenhall to go home and mind his own business, and then sending his nephew out to get this same Mendenhall's vote, together with those of his friends—thus showing that he would barter for the votes of even those whom he would not treat with the common courtesies of life; his approbation of the infamous imprisonment of the patriot Dorr by the Rhode Island Algerines; his duels with Marshall and Randolph, and his connection with the duel which resulted in the murder of Cilley—having himself written the challenge and dictated such terms of reconciliation as could not be accepted—and his cold-blooded declaration when the friends of the murdered man were in mourning, and his wife and children in the agony of despair, "that it would only be a nine days' bubble." I say, sir, in view of all these things, and as many more which might be enumerated did time permit, and upon which the people now look back with minds much more divested of prejudice than in the heat of the contest, a large number of the honest and reflecting portion of the whig party now in their hearts admit the justice of this verdict, and agree that we have "*served him right.*" They feel in their own bosoms that he is not the man for that great station; and if they dared to speak out, now that the smoke and dust of the conflict has blown away, that would be found to be the candid and honest conviction of a large portion of the whigs.

Mr. HARDIN here interposed, and said that such were not the views of the whigs.

Mr. HENLEY said it might not be of the whigs of that gentleman's particular district, but it was the

view of many honest whigs with whom he had conversed.

Mr. HARDIN. It is not the view of whigs anywhere.

Mr. HENLEY. How does the gentleman know?

Mr. HARDIN. I know more of the whigs than you do.

Mr. HENLEY. I admit that, sir; and now while we are on that subject, if you will agree to tell only half what you know, I will pledge myself to prove the truth of all I have charged against Mr. Clay and the whig party, and a great deal more. [Laughter.] Mr. Speaker, my colleague [Mr. C. B. SMITH] has stated one fact which I want noted; he tells you that the democracy of Indiana were for the annexation of Texas to this Union immediately, if not sooner. That is true, sir; we *were* for Texas immediately, and sooner if possible; we were for Texas, and we threw all minor difficulties and obstacles aside, and we repudiated all the *old-maidish* objections of the federal party to the union. We looked upon the lone star as the lost Pleiad—a wanderer from the bright constellation of States; and we looked upon its citizens as our brethren and friends—as bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. And when they knocked at the door of our glorious Union, like the prodigal son returning to his father's house, where there was enough and to spare; it was too much for Indiana hospitality, not to say christian benevolence, to refuse them admission. Indiana then, so far as she is concerned, is for Texas. We bid her welcome to our fireside, and to the enjoyment of all the privileges of a member of the family; and that, too, as my colleague rightly says, immediately, if not sooner.

But, sir, we are proud that we are not alone in this laudable desire; and if it had not been for the letter of Mr. Van Buren, which was construed into hostility to Texas, and those of Mr. Clay, there would now be no opposition to this measure but modern abolitionism and old federalism. There is at this moment a greater unanimity of sentiment, of spontaneous and enthusiastic public feeling in favor of this measure, than any other great question which has divided and agitated the people of this country; and whoever imagines that any other cause can prevent the reunion of Texas and the United States than the voluntary withdrawal of Texas herself, is utterly unacquainted with, or has studied in vain, the character of the anglo-Saxon race, which has been for a thousand years engaged in the spread of republicanism, of religion, and the principles of human liberty. They know but little of the peculiar traits of character, or indomitable perseverance of that people, who, two hundred years ago fled from the intolerance and oppression of the old world, and finding resting-place upon the shores of New England, there planted the standard of civil and religious liberty, sending forth population and the blessings of good government, like an irresistible tide, from Plymouth rock to the Gulf of Mexico—if they imagine that they can plant themselves upon the banks of the Sabine, like Canute upon the shores of the ocean, and cause this mighty tide to roll back its irresistible wave. Sir, they may, like Canute, command, and, like him, if they remain credulous to the flattery of sycophants, be swept into oblivion by the rolling flood. No man can stand in the current of public sentiment, especially when that sentiment has been running in the same

channel, gathering strength, and volume, and impetuosity for hundreds of years.

Let the politicians, and those who aspire to be leaders, look to it. The hand writing is upon the wall. Texas cannot be kept out of this Union; and the day is coming when opposition to Texas will be as odious as are the doctrines of that selfish set of politicians at this day, who sought in the Hartford convention to dissolve the Union, form New England into a separate confederacy, and subsequently refused to extend jurisdiction beyond the Alleghenies; objected to the admission of new States into the confederacy, alleging that our territory was then too large; and finally, prompted by the same contracted, illiberal, and unstatesman-like views, resisted the acquisition of Louisiana. Let us then take lessons from the past, and let the fate of the old federal party be a warning to all who would stand in the way of fair, and honorable, and legitimate acquisition of territory, and extension of the principles of our republican institutions to those who are willing and qualified to enjoy their blessings. Let us then, at once, reject the narrow-contracted and selfish policy of old federalism, and consummate this important acquisition without further delay. It is the decree of the people. Let it be done. My colleague, [Mr. C. B. SMITH,] and the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. SCHENCK,] have intimated that the contest was not conducted upon principle; now, so far as Indiana is concerned I know, and with regard to the whole Union I have good reason to believe, that in no election since the formation of the government, did the parties stand so manfully up to their principles as in the contest which has just closed. The democrats boldly, and upon every stump, avowed their political sentiments; and the whigs, unlike their course in 1840, as boldly proclaimed their advocacy of the measures and principles of Adams and Hamilton. It was in this way, and upon these issues, that the battle was fought and won; and for our opponents now to shrink from the consequences of a victory on our part, so fairly and honorably won upon their own issues, exhibits a degree of cowardice and want of manly bearing unworthy of that for which gave us so hard a fight, and cost us so much ammunition to conquer. No, let them acknowledge the truth; they are beaten—routed, horse, foot, and dragoons, upon their own battle field. Let them show the white feather, and ask an honorable capitulation and cessation of hostilities, or boldly gird on their armor and meet us again in the field of political combat. We are ready to fight them again upon the old issues, or to meet them upon any new *alias* they may choose to assume. Let them, if they DARE, raise the proscriptive flag of native Americanism, join the church-burners, and kindle in this country the flame of religious persecution which burned with such fearful intensity during the bloody reign of Queen Elizabeth in the sixteenth century—or disband their forces, as they did upon the accession of the democratic party to power in the election of that great apostle of American democracy, Thomas Jefferson, in the memorable political conflict of 1799 and 1800, and thus generously give to the new administration a fair trial. Let there be no disguises, no concealments, no denial of facts, no dodging the great issues. We are prepared now, as we shall be in all time to come, and have been on all former occasions, to do battle upon the eternal platform of democracy, equal rights, equal laws to all, and exclusive privileges to none; and for the perpetuation of those

great principles of human liberty, and their transmission, unsullied and unimpaired, to succeeding generations.

In reference to the tariff, I have only to say that it will be adjusted by the democratic party in the beginning of Mr. Polk's administration, and adjusted, too, in such a manner as will give satisfaction to the country. I trust, sir, we shall be able to satisfy not only Pennsylvania, but even South Carolina—*notwithstanding the democracy of one of her representatives [Mr. HOLMES] stands so straight up that it leans over the other way; and notwithstanding the declaration of the same gentleman last summer, that he had no hope of the salvation of the country except from the democratic party, and but little from them. The declaration of my friend from Alabama [Mr. PAYNE] on yesterday, (and for which I sincerely thank him,) in which he indignantly threw back the slander that is in every whig newspaper, and in the mouth of every whig orator in the land, that the southern democracy were for free trade and direct taxation, convinces me of the entire practicability of settling the tariff question in such a manner as to give entire satisfaction to every section of the Union, and upon such a basis as will not be shaken for twenty years to come. The tariff of 1842 must be modified. In three-fourths of its details it is odious, oppressive, and unjust. It is misnamed. It is not protective, but in the highest degree oppressive. And, as I remarked at the last session of Congress, it was the "resolute determination of the democracy to modify that tariff so soon as we should have a President and a Senate whose opinions coincided with those of the House of Representatives and of the people"—a state of things which I then predicted was not far distant—a prediction which has already been partly and will shortly be perfectly fulfilled. But the tariff is not so exclusively a party question. The present tariff was passed in the House by the votes of democrats representing interests locally affected by its provisions—a large number of whigs voting against it; and in the Senate its passage was secured by the votes of those sterling democrats Wright and Buchanan, though they were opposed to many of the details of the bill, and are now in favor of modification. And let it be borne in mind, too, that the whigs, who had a majority in both branches of Congress, had so managed it that this bill should pass or the government be left without revenue; and that many of the democrats who thus came to the rescue, did it, in part, to save the wheels of government from being stopped by the recklessness of whig leaders.*

This question is affected, in some degree, by local interests and feelings. All will, therefore, see the necessity of adjusting its details upon the principles of concession and compromise. The extremes of the North and the South must yield something. Perhaps they may meet upon the ground now occupied by the West—a tariff for revenue, with such incidental protection as may be afforded without oppression to any interests. At all events, sir, the question will be settled. We shall not split on that rock. There will be no division in our ranks upon the tariff. Let no whig lay that flattering unction to his soul.

But, for the benefit of my friend here from Pennsylvania, [Mr. C. J. INGERSOLL,] I must say that of course I have not the slightest allusion to the duties on coal and iron. [Laughter.] Seriously, however, I would say to that gentleman, and to all others from the iron State, that the duty on iron and the manufactures of iron is a *little* too high; and that

they had better agree to a compromise and a modification of them, or the time may come when we may be obliged to carry this measure without their aid, when those interests might not be so well provided for as they would desire. I repeat, then, to all concerned, the tariff of 1842 cannot stand.

Now, sir, in reference to the charge of fraud in the late election, thrown out in this debate, I will only say that it comes with an ill grace from the whig party. Guilty school-boys, and guilty men, too, when seeking to screen themselves, are usually loudest in accusing others of their own offences. This charge, sir, of corruption, under all the circumstances, is really amusing. I have a story of a gambler particularly applicable to this case. Several persons were playing at cards; the betting ran high; one of the number, to secure his object, had stolen from the deck several cards, corresponding with the trump then *up*, and hid them in his lap. A person who sat next to him removed them, and put others in their place. The rogue bet his money, and played out his cards, and to his utter astonishment they were of another suit. He paused a moment, and, with great indignation and pretended honesty, exclaimed, "Gentlemen, I'll be d—d if there ain't cheating around the board!"

Now, let us see whether this fits the case of the whig party at this moment. Let us see if they have not stolen cards from the deck to suit the game; and now that they have not won, as was expected, are they not exclaiming with the blackleg, "there is cheating round the board!" I shall only enumerate a few of the glaring outrages of the whig party in the late election, as a sample of an almost infinite number which might be mentioned, did time permit.

Do you remember, sir, the story which was industriously circulated in all the federal papers of the North and West—said to be taken, I think, from the travels of one Roorback—to this effect: that the aforesaid Roorback was travelling in the South; that he saw upon the banks of Duck river an encampment of negroes, with their drivers, proceeding to the southern market, and that these negroes were branded with the initials of "J. K. P.," and were the property of James K. Polk, the democratic candidate for President of the United States? This was a base forgery, and used for a base and infamous purpose.

I shall next advert to the gold humbug, which originated also in the Roorback mint, and was most tenaciously adhered to by the federal press and federal orators in every part of the Union. I mean the story of the subscription of money in England to circulate free-trade tracts in the United States, and influence the election in favor of Mr. Polk. The whole country was flooded with this alarming intelligence, and handbills as large as an advertisement for the exhibition of a menagerie of wild animals were posted up at every cross roads and upon the doors of every whig store, tavern house, and grocery, in the country; and honest whigery put on a long face, and pretended to feel great alarm at the idea of foreign interference in our elections. This, too, was a forgery, and so barefaced that their leaders knew it at the time. And, notwithstanding it has been proved and admitted to be a forgery on all hands, their newspapers have never published the truth, nor attempted to undeceive those who were gullible enough to be deluded by such nonsense. And yet they talk about fraud!

The following extract from an English newspaper, the "London Leauge" of the 19th October,

1844, when the news of this forgery reached England, settles the question, and conclusively fixes the infamous act of wicked and malicious forgery upon the whig leaders.

"THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY.—By the late arrivals from America, it would appear that a considerable change is taking place in reference to the prospects of the two candidates for the presidency. The friends of Mr. Clay seem to be less confident, but more violent in their language, which, for vituperation, certainly eclipses any thing we have ever read in Europe. We observe that their newspapers have been forging 'political capital' by spreading the report, that the free traders in England have subscribed £100,000 to assist in carrying the election of Mr. Polk. We expect to hear next that we are setting up a new dynasty at Pekin. By the way, the inventor of this story—the editor of the New York Republic newspaper—ought to be whipped by his employers for the clumsiness with which he has forged what Sheridan calls the 'endorsement to the lie.' He pretends to give a report of the public meeting in Manchester, at which this subscription was commenced, and puts the 'Lord Provost' in the chair! Be it known to all interested, that Manchester has no such functionary; and we need hardly add, that the persons over whom he had presided—a long list of whose names is given in the Republic—had no bodily existence there. It is bad enough for the reputation of American democracy in Europe, when we are told that there are any large number of persons in the United States to be deluded by such trash; but what must be thought of the Republic, and other protectionist prints, who can be gulled by raw-head-and-bloody-bones stories, such as the above."

Mr. H. here read several authenticated extracts from newspapers, showing that several articles had appeared in whig journals prior to the election, to the effect that J. G. Birney, the abolition candidate for the presidency, had been nominated for the legislature by the democrats of Michigan; that he was friendly to the election of Mr. Polk; and finally, that he had declined an election and recommended his friends to vote the democratic ticket; all of which, he said, were now well understood to be base and unmitigated forgeries. He insisted that the democratic party had not only discountenanced every attempt at fraud, but that all their hopes of success rested upon the preservation, in its purity, of the elective franchise.

Now, it is far from my intention or design, in anything I have said, to attribute to the mass of the whig party such motives or designs as these facts show some of their leaders to have been guilty of. On the contrary, I accord to the great body of our opponents the same degree of honesty, integrity, and patriotism that I claim for my own party.

And it is for this reason that I have made this expose, that honest whigs (and there are many such) may see the company they are in, and repudiate and abandon the party which can be guilty of perpetrating such gross and disgraceful frauds upon the country, and then put on the bold front of impudent guilt, and charge their own crimes upon others.

Now, sir, I desire to call your attention, and the attention of the country, to the manner in which the news of the election has been received in England, where our opponents have falsely and basely contended an interest was felt for the success of the democratic party. And, by the extracts which I have before me, it will be seen that the English papers really believe the declarations of the whig press in this country, that Mr. Polk was an obscure and unknown man, and are really at a loss to account for his success; and that almost the same views of the subject are taken by the tory papers in England and the whig papers in the United States. It will be seen, also, that the tory party in Great Britain have a particular sympathy and fellow feeling with their whig friends on this side of the water.

The first extract I take is from the London Times a high tory paper:

"This nomination of the presidential electors has just been completed, and it appears to leave no doubt as to the triumph of the democratic party, and of their candidate, Mr. Polk. The surprise—and we must add, the apprehensions and regret—which this event will produce in Europe, are increased by the fact that it is the great States of New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, which have turned the scale. Far from exercising that moderating power, and, if we may so speak of anything in America, that conservative influence which might seem to belong to their position, their wealth, their mercantile interests, and their exemption from slavery, Pennsylvania has in this instance obeyed the same influences which have already connected her name with bankruptcy and anarchy, and New York has followed her example.

"Of Mr. Polk we know nothing, except that he has achieved a triumph over the most able and respected man in the Union, although he was scarcely more known in that Union a few months ago than he now is in Europe. He has not been chosen for his past services, or his political experience, or for civil eloquence, or for military fame; for these qualities would doubtless long ago have brought him within our notice, if he had possessed them or any of them. But the less of personal greatness or influence he could boast of, the better was he fitted to answer the expectations of his adherents. Whatever he may turn out to be hereafter, we can only judge of him at present as the delegate or instrument of the passions by which he has been thus strangely raised into this conspicuous position. As such, then, we must remark, with no ordinary concern, that with the single exception of the tariff question, on which he is pledged to a more liberal commercial policy than his opponent, his election to this important office is the triumph of everything that is worst over everything that is best in the United States of America. It is a victory gained by the South over the North—by the slave States over the free—by the repudiating States over the honest ones—by the partisans of the annexation of Texas over its opponents—by the adventurous and unscrupulous democracy of the new States, and the foreign population in those States, over the more austere and dignified republicanism of New England."

The article speaks at length of the dreadful consequences to result from the election of Mr. Polk, and says "the whig party has been defeated when everything depended on the possibility of restoring moderation and probity to the government of the country by their influence."

And again, to show the affinity between British and whig journals, hear the following, from the same paper; and similar to which a score of articles can be found in the whig papers of this country in reference to the power of the whig Senate, and their hopes in that quarter. The London Times says:

"But the strict limitations imposed by the constitution on the power of the chief magistrate, and more especially the control exercised by the Senate of the United States over his relations with foreign powers, render the triumph less signal and the danger less imminent. Be the indiscretion of a President what it may, he can scarcely plunge the country into war or confusion as long as the Senate remains faithful to its trust. What, therefore, we chiefly deplore on the present occasion is, the defeat of those men who were most able and most willing to have labored to restore the financial and political credit of their country; who, if they were unable to shake off the curse of slavery, would at least have striven to prevent the consequences of slavery from becoming the guiding and general law of the public policy of the Union; who would have abstained from rapine, maintained peace, and adhered to the doctrines which once shed honor on the characters of American statesmen. Clay and Webster are still entitled to that name; but the time is past when they could guide the destinies of their country; and by casting them off in the hour of trial, the people of the United States have only rendered the vices of their present condition more conspicuous, and prepared the way for the increasing evils and excesses of their future career."

The article then remarks upon what will and what will not be done under the new administration, and adds:

"No bank, no distribution can take place for the present new negotiations may be opened for the annexation of Texas: but, as the Senate will be whig for two years at least, nothing can be done effectually as regards that matter for some time to come."

The next extract to which I ask attention, is from the London Spectator, another tory paper. Similar sentiments will be easily recognised as having appeared in many a whig paper in this country.

"There is nothing surprising in the result of the presidential election in the United States. It is merely a repetition of what has happened at every election since 1800. The democratic mass has obtained another victory over the doctrinaires of America. Since the recognition of American independence in Great Britain, there has always been a doctrinaire party in the Union; it has been almost a hereditary party. Hamilton was in a manner its founder; the two Adamases have been its principal ornaments. It has enrolled under its banners a decided majority of the public men of the Union, who, born to a competency, have enjoyed a systematic education, and opportunities of cultivating refined tastes. It has been an intelligent, and, on the whole, an honorable party—rather sceptical, the natural tendency of men of the world, as to the perfectibility of man or the wisdom and virtue of the masses—with a good deal of knowledge, a great deal of fastidiousness, and not a little pedantry. This party has from its character been more powerful in coteries than with the public. It has had too much faith in abstractions and precedents to know and control actual circumstances; its little airs of superior refinement and learning have alienated and disgusted the great body of electors. It has called itself federalists at one time and whig at another; but it has still been the same unchanged and unchangeable party, the counterpart of the Gironde or the doctrinaires of France—of the 'liberal whigs,' or the 'educated radicals' of England.

"Opposed to this party of men made by schools and colleges, has always been the great democratic mass, which feels rather than thinks—which heeds men—leaders, as the exponents and visible symbols of principles. When the Union has had a statesman of commanding character, this sentient body has been guided by his will. So was it in the times of Jefferson, of Madison, of Monroe."

The Liverpool Mail furnishes the next extract. He lights upon the American democracy with a fiendishness he must have derived from the spirit of whigery in this country:

"A citizen of the name of Polk—a man unknown to fame—has been virtually elected President of the United States of America, thereby defeating the pretensions of Mr. Henry Clay. Mr. Polk, who stood on the locofoco or rabble interest, has declared himself favorable to the annexation of Texas to the federal Union, to slavery, and a modified tariff. Mr. Clay is what the Americans call a 'whig,' an anti-slavite, a man of peace, favorable to a stiff tariff, heavy customs, and unbounded protection to American manufactures. How he came to be beaten is rather curious.

"The false, if not fraudulent, principle upon which the American constitution is founded, is year by year sinking the republic deeper in the mire. For instance: it is the law there that every foreigner who comes has it in his power, by means of a declaration, to become a free citizen, and vote in the elections. The Americans thought this wise policy at the commencement of their independence, on the principle that having stolen the property of their king, they had an equal right to steal his or any other king's subjects. It is an adage, that stolen property never thrives—never, in the end, benefits the thief; and the Americans have at length discovered this to be a fact. For many years, tens of thousands of Irishmen, Germans, Poles, and other foreigners, have landed on their shores, a vast proportion of them in rags, hungry, and homeless, ready, of course, to work, beg, fight, or do anything for a dish of potatoes, a slice of pumpkin pie, and a draught of sour cider. These men have become electors; and they are not only formidable in point of numbers, but, what is more to the purpose, every man's vote is worth from ten to fifteen votes in all the large towns. They consequently carry all the elections, by force and fraud.

"The native Americans, of the more reputable class, complain of this, and lament it. It is lamentable indeed—it is disgraceful—it is demoralizing."

The next extract I quote is from the Dublin Freeman's Journal, showing that the election of Mr. Polk is hailed with joy by the liberty-loving sons of the Emerald Isle:

"We cannot but look upon this election, therefore, as fortunate, if not providential. The 'native Americans' have been signally discomfited, and the whigs, who not alone accepted, but who courted a participation in their deep and indelible disgrace, have received a defeat the most

disastrous that ever befel a party. But what makes this result more acceptable to the feelings of the friends of Ireland is, that the defeat is owing to the horror which the combination of whigs and 'natives' inspired in Pennsylvania, where their atrocities, as their principles, were best known, and where the whig candidate has been defeated on this occasion by a much larger majority than that which supported the pretensions of General Harrison in the election of 1840."

I close the extracts from English papers with the following from Willmer and Smith's (London) Times:

"Mr. Polk's success has not been favorably received in England. He is a new man; his name is strange to our ears, as, until recently, it was to those of his own countrymen; and the English love not new names nor new men."

Mr. Speaker, in reference to the charge of delusion on the part of the people in supporting Mr. Polk, I must say, in truth and candor, that never in my life have I witnessed among the people such diligent and patient examination of national and political questions, or such fixed and unalterable determination to defeat an opponent as was manifested against Mr. Clay and the whig party. The feeling seemed to have grown up spontaneously in the breasts of all. I left this city, sir, after the nomination, resolved to do all in my power to inspire the people with zeal, enthusiasm, and ardor for the coming contest. But long before I had reached my home in the West, I found the main body of the people ten-fold more hostile to Mr. Clay than I was myself. It is impossible to describe the intensity of feeling which I found pervading all classes of society when I reached the West. Sir, the people were not deceived. No one who mingled with them in the canvass can say so. It was their own spontaneous feeling, too. It was not the work of politicians, but it burst forth from the hearts of the people themselves. Old and young, men and women, all seemed to be opposed to whigery; and even the very children, as you passed through the country, came tottling to the doors of the cabins, with their white heads and smiling countenance, crying "hurrah for Polk and Dallas." Sir, you should have witnessed some of the large mass meetings of the democracy, with their tens of thousands assembled from hill and dale, from mountain and from valley, from city and from country, to give impetus to the democratic cause; you should have seen the ladies, with their beauty and their smiles, presenting to the voters, on these occasions, those magnificent democratic banners, the work of their own hands, which floated upon every breeze, and bore upon their ample folds, "Polk and Dallas, Texas and Oregon;" you should have seen them again with twenty-five of their number, attired in white, bearing appropriate flags representing each State in the Union, and the twenty-sixth clothed in the deepest weeds of mourning, for the persecutions of the unfortunate Dorr; you should have heard, too, that shout that went up to the very heavens in aid of the great cause; and, above all, you should have seen the anxiety which was depicted upon the countenances of the multitude, which spoke from their hearts the interest they felt in the success of the democratic party. To understand and appreciate the merits of this contest, Mr. Chairman, you should have seen and mixed with the interesting scenes which attended it. And then, sir, when the fight was over, and it was known that the result depended upon the vote of New York, who can forget the breathless anxiety and silence with which the news from that State was listened to? And when it came, who can forget or describe that

shout of joy, clear and loud, which rent the air and made the "welkin ring?" And all this, too, from the mechanics, the laboring men, from those in the humble walks of life! It was from those, in the shops of the mechanics and in the fields of the farmers, that this decree first went forth—that the days of whiggery should be numbered. Nor was it on account of Mr. Polk, or any other political leader, that this result has been brought about, but because the people had resolved in their heart of hearts to defeat Mr. Clay and his high-handed schemes of federalism. However much our opponents may cavil about what has been decided by this election, two things they will at heart admit to have been distinctly decided—first, that James K. Polk shall be President of the United States; and second, that Henry Clay never shall. Another thing has been decided, and is now the judgment of the nation—to wit: that the democracy shall be vested with power to wield the destinies of this great country for the ensuing four years, and as much longer as they shall make themselves worthy of this important and responsible trust; and in doing this, the people have not been deceived, deluded, nor humbugged. It was their deliberate judgment to make this trial. They *had* been deceived by whig promises in 1840, and they resolved to look for honesty and integrity in another quarter. But let me tell you where *we* can be charged with deception. *We* will be guilty of base deception, sir, when *we* fail to administer the government upon the true principles of republican democracy—when we fail to discharge our duty faithfully and diligently, not only in this hall, but in every department of government. We are now in the ascendancy; the responsibility will shortly rest upon our shoulders. We shall soon have to act; professions will no longer avail. The tree is known by its fruit. We must "show our faith by our works." We have, it is true, made no high-sounding professions nor delusive promises, but we must honestly fulfil the expectations of the people; and if we do this, there is no danger of the democracy for years to come; but if not, we shall not deserve to hold our places—we will be hurled from power just as the whigs have been. And now let me tell my political friends what I have been desirous to tell them for some time: they must not fold their hands in sloth and security. There is much to do, if the expectations of the people are realized. Industry, economy, retrenchment and reform, must become the order of the day. We must work, and work industriously; our compensation is ample. We must stick to our seats in this hall, and remain in them a given number of hours each day, long enough to satisfy the country that we are doing the public business. What are we doing? What will the people say when they learn that we meet at 12 o'clock, and adjourn at 2 o'clock? Will they not say we had about as well not meet at all? And when we are here but little is done, for the simple reason that it is well understood that a large portion of the business is not to be touched; and hence the parliamentary privileges of the House are monopolised by a few old members, and no one else can get the floor, either to get business introduced or acted upon; and hence, too much of our time is spent in taking the yeas and nays on motions to suspend the rules to get one man's business ahead of another's, and other questions which grow out of this state of things.

Why, sir, the business calendar of the House of Representatives, I am told, has not been gone

through in ten years. There are just demands against the government, and other important business upon your calendar, which has been there for years; and those interested in them have attended here, and spent their time and money until they have become sick and disgusted, and abandoned them in despair. Sir, this is wrong. It is our duty to act upon all business brought before this body. It is the great legislature of the nation. Every man's business should have a hearing; and every man has a right to demand an investigation of his case. We have the remedy for all these evils. We must work. We must remain here at least four hours each day; and that time must be industriously devoted to legislation.

Mr. C. J. INGERSOLL here interposed, and said the British House of Commons sat nine hours per day.

Mr. HENLEY continued. I was not aware of that, sir; but I most sincerely believe that this is the most indolent legislative body in the world. The legislature of my own State sits about seven hours; and I believe in none of the States in the Union do their legislatures sit less than six hours per day.

There as some gentlemen who attend here at the meeting of the House, remain a few minutes, and then very deliberately take their hats and cloaks and cane, and put on their kid gloves, and walk out with a measured and dignified step, as much as to say, "I am too genteel to stay here and do the drudgery of legislation; I will take a stroll upon the avenue." I notice that our whig friends usually vote for early adjournments, and all other motions calculated to delay business. They are not to blame for this; they are not responsible. The country looks to us; we are the responsible party; we have reached a new era in our government; we must go ahead; we must at least keep up with the people. In this age of steamboats, locomotives and railroads, when everything is done upon the high pressure principle, legislation must not lag behind; a new leaf must be turned; as Mr. Webster said, new books must be opened; at all events we must go ahead. And then, sir, for the first time in the history of our government, a young man has been elected to the presidency. But there is another new feature in it; he was elected by the young men; ay, sir, by the young democracy; and it was by industry, by zeal, and by ardent labor that they accomplished this glorious work. And now, sir, if we wish to retain our places, and fulfil the honest expectations of the country, it must be done by the same industry, and the honest zeal which elected Mr. Polk. But should we fail to discharge our duty, or prove recreant to the high trust reposed in us, you cannot imagine how deeply it would mortify the honest and confiding democracy of this country. It would drive a pang deep into the heart of many a whole-souled democrat as he pushed his plane, swung his axe, or followed his plough. There are high hopes and fond and generous confidence reposed in us now by the people. They must not be deceived. One word more, Mr. Chairman; there is no danger on the part of our newly elected President. I feel a sort of consciousness in my own bosom that all is right in that quarter. The people are not only satisfied, but gratified with the election of Mr. Polk; and it is my most sincere belief that he will make not only as good, but as popular a President as ever filled that chair. Such are the hopes, the expectations and confidence of the country. May they be fully realized.